



Prevent Flu — Get Vaccinated!

FIGHTING FLU IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS: BUILDING BLOCKS TO INCREASE INFLUENZA AWARENESS

WHAT IS THE FLU?

Influenza, or “the flu,” is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs). The flu virus tends to spread from November to April, with most cases occurring between December and March. The flu is often confused with the common cold, but flu symptoms tend to develop quickly (usually 1 to 4 days after a person is exposed to the flu virus) and are usually more severe than the typical sneezing and congestion associated with a cold. Influenza is often accompanied with fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are also common symptoms in children. A person infected with the flu virus will typically suffer from the illness for approximately 7 to 10 days, with 5 to 6 days of limited activity and about 3 days of bed rest.

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?

Any child older than 6 months old can get vaccinated against influenza. However, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) specifically recommends that all children from 6 months up to age 5 get vaccinated against the flu every year. In addition, children with certain medical conditions, and household contacts (parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) and out-of-home caregivers of children age 0 up to age 5 should get vaccinated against the flu every year. Children and adults that are household contacts of other high-risk individuals are also recommended to get vaccinated. However, all persons, including school-aged children, who want to reduce the risk of becoming ill with the flu or transmitting it to others, should get vaccinated every year.

ARE KIDS FLU TRANSMITTERS?

Children are two-to-three times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu because of their less-developed immune systems. About 41 percent of preschool children are cared for in organized child care settings at least part of the time, which means a considerable number of children are sharing toys and sharing germs. A flu vaccination can help children stay free of influenza during the flu season, and potentially help stop the spread of the virus to their families, friends, teachers and communities.

School-aged children also tend to have higher rates of influenza infection because of their close contact with friends and classmates who frequently spread germs among one another. In fact, during bad flu seasons, nearly 30 percent of school-aged children get sick and miss about 38 million school days a year overall.

HOW SERIOUS IS THE FLU IN KIDS?

- More children die from the flu than from chicken pox, whooping cough and measles combined. In fact, over the past four flu seasons more than 300 children have died from influenza in the U.S.
- Approximately 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized due to the flu each year.
- According to the CDC, vaccination against the flu each year is the single best way to prevent influenza. Vaccination may help to decrease the spread of the virus among children in child care settings and among care providers.

Visit www.naccp.org or call 1-800-537-1118 for more information.

Sponsored by the National Association of Child Care Professionals and Families Fighting Flu, Inc.



National Association of Child Care Professionals



FAMILIES
FIGHTING FLU, INC.